

# Announcing September's SPOT Award Winners

## *Dina Heidar*

I, Perry Theriot, would like to nominate Ms. Dina Heidar, Environmental Scientist III in the Permits Support Section of Environmental Services for a SPOT award. A short history should serve to show how Ms. Heidar has performed well above and beyond the duties normally assigned to her.

In September, I was transferred from the Legal Division to my new post as Ombudsman for DEQ. When I was transferred, I was tasked with coming up with a system for documenting Ombudsman activities that would begin to build information that would be available to the department to better interact with the public. After conferring with a past Ombudsman, I came to the conclusion that an electronic form and database would be beneficial. I was referred to Ms. Heidar for assistance. Upon meeting her, I was impressed by her cooperation and her knowledge of computer processes that would meet the Ombudsman's needs.

Ms. Heidar's job description does not include performing work for the Ombudsman. Nonetheless, with a smile and with enthusiasm Dina agreed to help me, while continuing to perform her required duties. Working with me, including attending many meetings taking her away from her regular duties, Ms. Heidar was able to design an Access Database that matched the items that I wished to track. Her work, and her attitude about performing that work, has been OUTSTANDING. She continues to perform modifications in the database as needs arise.

In this day and time of doing more with less, Ms. Heidar has voluntarily put in time to assist me in incorporating an electronic database for use of the Ombudsman. I believe she exceeds all the criteria for a SPOT award. Please consider her for this month's award.



Dina Heidar receiving her SPOT Award

As a note—I would also like to thank Nathan Levy and Chris Mayeux for allowing time for Dina to work with me.

## *Eura DeHart*

It is our privilege to nominate Eura DeHart for September's SPOT award. Eura is an Environmental Scientist in the Office of Environmental Services / Water Permits Division. He is responsible for writing individual LPDES water discharge permits for municipal facilities and landfills and individual sewage sludge disposal facility permits. The Sewage Sludge Use & Disposal regulations are new to the Water Permits Division. Eura has not only learned the regulations, but took the initiative to develop the first State Master General Permit for the Disposal of Sewage Sludge in a Landfill. This general permit is unique from other general permits because it is the first general permit for sewage sludge. Eura managed to develop and issue the draft permit in less than two and a half months. The draft permit was signed October 8, 2009. This Master General Permit will greatly improve the permitting process by streamlining



Eura DeHart receiving his SPOT Award

the issuance of sewage sludge disposal facility permits. Once issued, it is estimated that it will cover approximately 60% of sewage sludge treatment facilities. By 2011, all sanitary treatment plants will be required to obtain a sewage sludge permit. Those facilities that dispose sewage sludge into a landfill will be eligible for coverage under this permit. Eura has also been heavily involved in the registration process of sewage sludge haulers including creating mail merge forms, reviewing and mailing letters and submitting documents to EMDS. In addition to his expanding knowledge of sewage sludge and helping others in the Sewage Sludge Program, Eura has continued to complete his assigned LPDES permits, which include some of the most complex sanitary discharge facilities and landfills. He is patient, professional, and courteous with peers as well as with the general public.

## *Beverly Allen*

I would like to recommend Ms. Beverly Allen, Administrative Coordinator 3 with the Office of Environmental Compliance Surveillance Division, Northwest Regional Office in Shreveport, LA for the LDEQ SPOT Award. Beverly has been with LDEQ since August 31, 2000. She was crucial in planning, implementing and executing the recent Sewage Sludge Hauler's Seminar held on September 24, 2009. Planning for the seminar began back in July of this year. Beverly was brought into the planning shortly after that due to overwhelming amount of work that was going to be required to make it a successful seminar. She immediately stepped in took over all of those time consuming and tedious tasks required. Beverly mailed out 163 registration forms to those persons directly affected by the new sewage sludge regulations in our region. She also contacted those by phone considered to be the entities or individuals most impacted by the new regulations. The information was also placed on our webpage and generated a lot phone-in and fax registrations. She then created a database of the registrations received and used that information to track and create the certificates for the seminar attendees. She worked with the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH) in acquiring the information needed to grant 3 Continuing Educational Unit (CEU's) hours for the sewage treatment plant operators in attendance at the seminar. She made the arrangements with the Louisiana Technical College in obtaining the space, tables and equipment needed for the seminar. She was also instrumental in developing the sign-in, registration and evaluation sheets. On the day of the seminar, Beverly managed the registration of those in attendance making sure that they completed all of the required paperwork by LDHH to obtain their CEU's. She also oversaw the setup and distribution of refreshments. Even now, after the seminar, Beverly is continuing to provide assistance to those individuals that did not preregister by ensuring that they receive their certificates and CEU's. Thanks to Beverly, the seminar was very successful and



Beverly Allen receiving her SPOT Award

reached approximately 129 persons of the regulated community. All of the feedback from the attendees indicated that this was a very well organized and implemented seminar thanks in great part to Beverly.

I would like to nominate Beverly Allen for the DEQ SPOT Award. Mrs. Allen is the Office Manager for the Northwest Regional Office in Shreveport. DEQ's Small Business Small Community Assistance Program was assigned the task of following up with "Front Loading 2009 - Round 2 of the visits with the Mayors and Parish Presidents." As the Small Business representative in the NWRO, I was assigned fifty six visits to make. Mrs. Allen volunteered to make the appointments and arrange the visiting schedule; saving valuable time and allowing me to complete the visits within the allotted time frame. My comment was "I didn't realize the amount of time it took just to set up the appointments. One has to call, wait for a response, shuffle meeting times, just to get going. Beverly did an excellent job."

During the time of the Mayor's visits, the Region received word that it would be the first to put on a

seminar program dealing with Sewage Sludge Hauling. Mrs. Allen jumped in and did more than her part. She prepared and sent out the information notices, gathered and recorded reservations, produced certificates for all attendees, prepared the meeting room request form, made copies and assembled information packets to hand out, and obtained DHH operator credit hours approval for the program. She also telephoned some of the haulers that had not responded reminding them of the program. During the program Mrs. Allen was in charge of the registration, handing out packets and the certificates, and was in charge of the clean up. After the program she followed up in sending to DHH the operators credit hours earned, assembled and copied the registration forms and additional information. Mrs. Allen reported that 129 folks had attended the seminar.

We thank Mrs. Beverly Allen for her work above and beyond – we could have not accomplished the two tasks, the Mayor visits and the seminar without her. Thank you Beverly.

## Alex Prochaska

I would like to nominate Alex Prochaska for this month's Spot Award. Alex worked endless hours both during the week and on weekends pulling together the department's initial Streamlining Report.

I personally worked with Alex on weekends in compiling this report and never once did Alex show hesitation. When the report's format was changed at the last minute, Alex just said "okay" and moved forward. When the due date was moved to an earlier time Alex said "no problem."

We met with the Governor's office on Friday to discuss the Streamlining Report and changes were made. Of course, the due date for the report was Monday at 2:00 p.m. Again, Alex and I worked all

weekend to meet the due date with no problem. He even worked through the weekend of his girlfriend's birthday.

As a result of Alex's unyielding commitment to fulfilling the Governor's requests to provide DEQ's Streamlining Report by making the necessary changes as asked and adhering to the changing due dates, DEQ was able to submit a very professional and thorough Streamlining Report on the morning of the due date.



Alex Prochaska receiving his SPOT Award